

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Bureau of Health Professions Licensure
Board of Registration in Nursing

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March 9, 2020

Dear Program Administrators:

The Board has received inquiries about planning for the Coronavirus and the impact it may have on students enrolled in nursing programs. We encourage nursing programs to work with their parent institution and clinical partners to develop a plan. Here are some resources/tips to keep in mind.

Keep informed about the Coronavirus and ensure that students and faculty are aware of how to reduce transmission and recognize signs of illness: <https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

Follow your parent institution plan. CDC has a published resource you may find helpful, "Colleges and Universities Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist": https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/pdf/colleges_universities.pdf

If students are excluded from clinical, then the nursing program may need to determine alternative methods to meet the objectives of the course. Simulation could be used as a substitute for traditional clinical experience. Please see the NCSBN Simulation Guidelines for Prelicensure Nursing Programs: <https://www.ncsbn.org/11494.htm>

If alternative clinical sites are used to meet course objectives, remember that clinical affiliation agreements must meet the regulatory requirements at 244 CMR 6.04(5)(f) and clinical groups must maintain a student faculty ratio of no more than 10:1.

If the nursing program makes temporary changes, notification to the Board is not necessary. If the nursing program makes permanent changes, notification to the Board may be required. Please see the templates for reporting changes to the Board: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/nursing-education-programs-compliance-guidelines-and-reports#-program-reports:-reporting-changes-to-the-massachusetts-board-of-nursing>. If you have any questions on how to report these changes, please contact Board staff.

March 20, 2020

Simulation in various formats both traditional and virtual may be used to meet clinical objectives for all nursing students.

Nursing programs determine clinical objective, end of program learning outcomes and graduation requirements.

Students who graduate from an approved nursing program are eligible to sit for NCLEX.